



Italian Cultural Institute
WASHINGTON



FRAMMENTI

October 11, 2017
Embassy of Italy, Washington DC

The Embassy of Italy and the Italian Cultural Institute, with the Pratt Institute and Ivy University, present an exhibit exploring the layered themes of memory, continuity, and remembrance as seen through the lenses of several generations of Italians.

Artists **Kikki Ghezzi** and **Riccardo Vecchio** invest their works with the physical remnants and records of family memories and historical events. Fragments of memory, and fragments of time, *Frammenti* referred to here, are captured by these two Italian artists to help us understand the longer continuum of life, and reflect the concerns of their generation as culture responds to an increasingly hectic world.

"...Today we inaugurate a thought provoking exhibition curated by Lisa Banner. We focus on two contemporary Italian artists, Kikki Ghezzi and Riccardo Vecchio. The artwork on display aims at exploring the theme of memory in its many forms: feelings, images and emotions. This is the mission of our Embassy: to showcase contemporary Italy..."

Armando Varricchio
Ambassador of Italy to the United States



This exhibition explores the layered themes of memory, continuity, and remembrance as seen through the lenses of several generations of Italians. Artists Kikki Ghezzi and Riccardo Vecchio invest their works with the physical remnants and records of family memories and historical events. In Ghezzi's work, the importance of her connection to prior generations of strong women in her family is physically manifest in her use of heirloom linens, embroidered by her grandmother, that have been passed down as a dowry in a traditional *cassone*, and now serve as the literal support for her paintings. Fragments of memory, and fragments of time, the *frammenti* referred to here, are captured by these two northern Italian artists to help us understand the longer continuum of life, and reflect the concerns of their generation as culture responds to an increasingly hectic world.

Kikki Ghezzi is an experiential artist, creating installations and paintings that interpret poignant memories of her childhood in Milan and in the village of Bormio, along with more recent vivid works of universal appeal, exploring the connection through three generations of Italian women. Her work relies upon memory as inspiration, as she shares spiritual and often metaphysical realities. The *24 Ore* refer to the contents of a briefcase, designed to hold the day's essentials. Filled with prints in a variety of colors, the *24 Ore* hold literal impressions, in printed form, of the interiors of her family's home in Italy. In the last of three valises, Ghezzi placed a sealed letter to her parents, a sort of memorial to her family and upbringing, after their deaths. The spiritual qualities of Ghezzi's work, both meditative and contemplative, offer the viewer an opportunity to pause and reflect upon their own connections to family and the past, in a quiet way, with the metaphorical embrace of a daily briefcase to hold and contain thoughts of the day. Ghezzi excels in finding the universal voice in the personal. Using the hand-embroidered linens, pillowcases, and sheets handed down to her from her mother and grandmother, Ghezzi brings together the personal and historical threads that literally connect these three generations, and presents these works in fresh fashion to a new contemporary audience. Lisa A. Banner

"In his famous 1983 "critique de la Modernite" pamphlet Jean Clair stated: "...once the messianic preclusion of avant-garde or socialist realism was abolished, and the mortgage which weighed it down lifted, the sense of modernity has once again found its mobility and plasticity...to include the knowledge that it's mortal." This is a 1983 sense of contemporaneity given by the French critic. In 2017, however, a more fluid concept of Contemporaneity - as in "artists working today" - takes us back to a freer representation of our past, both in terms of a "personal past" and in that of an "historical" and thus shared past. This is what happens with our Kikki Ghezzi and Riccardo Vecchio in their "La poetica del frammento" (The poetics of Fragments) - hence the title of the exhibition - of references, decolonization, circularity and the tearing of gashes of "revisited memory", which at once testify - and return - autonomy to Time and take possession of what is called "canon of the forbidden" (term used for the first time by Adorno - *Kanon des Verbotenen*), which uses the development of expressive means to attain emotional and historic communication. Another quote springs to mind, that of our dearly missed Umberto Eco, who declared that "the postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocence." Thus the fabric used and Kikki's briefcases enclose and revisit episodes and artifacts in a circular recollection where you are likely to be ensnared. The refined and subtle spirituality of the narrative, which turns into historic comment and detachment, is encapsulated in the cases which become receptacles of an inheritance that transcends the personal level and becomes the collective memory of a generation..."

Renato Miracco

